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ABSTRACT

The conventional wisdom of numerous practitioners and researchers suggests that on issues of structure and control the school can best be described and analyzed in the bureaucratic framework. However, the bureaucratic model fails to recognize the intervening character that the presence of professionalism has on the process of school governance. The data from this research, drawn from a field study, are used to construct the Interacting Spheres Model which, it is argued, is capable of clarifying the decision-making ramifications of professional employees working in bureaucratic organizations. The model suggests the presence of two interacting spheres of influence, with some decisions formally delegated to administrators and others informally assumed by teachers. Each sphere maintains a degree of decisional autonomy but with identifiable limits placed on that autonomy. Members of each sphere have developed strategies designed to aid them in indirectly managing behavior in the other sphere as well as strategies for defending their own sphere against attempted outside intervention. (Author)

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SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND THE PROFESSIONAL/BUREAUCRATIC INTERFACE: A CASE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

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SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND THE PROFESSIONAL/BUREAUCRATIC INTERFACE:
A CASE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

"The most important thing to know about organizations," Joe Kelly (1974:1) writes, "is that they do not exist--except in peoples' minds." What he seems to be saying here is that the stuff of organizations that makes them organizations is social and not physical. With regard to the social processes within an organization, the conventional wisdom of most researchers and writers seems to suggest that the school is best described and analyzed within the bureaucratic framework (Abbott, 1969; Anderson, 1968; Goslin, 1965, Rogers, 1968).

Clearly, the public school has many characteristics which suggest it is a derivative of bureaucratic theory. For example, the school maintains a well defined hierarchy of authority (teacher to principal to superintendent), power is centralized in the role of the chief executive, rules stipulate expected and prohibited behavior (education code, district policy, school handbook), a specific division of labor exists (English teachers, history teachers, counselors, aides), experts are hired for these positions (university diplomas, state certificates), and a precisely defined work flow is established (first to second to third grade).

However, as Talcott Parsons (in Weber, 1947:58-60) and Alvin Gouldner (1954:22-24) have stressed, Weber's approach to the study of organization and administration fails to recognize the intervening

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character that the presence of professionalism has on the process of governance. (Governance will be used here to mean control of the decision-making process.) In recent years a strand of literature has been developing which seems to be groping for more adequate conceptual models through which the process of school decision-making can be understood (Bidwell, 1965; Lortie, 1969; Corwin, 1965; Katz, 1964; Hanson, 1973; Bridges, 1970). As Dan Lortie (1964:273) points out:

> The bureaucratic model, in emphasizing the formal distribution of authority, does not prepare us for many of the events that actually occur in public schools. Teachers, for example, lay claim to and get, informally, certain types of authority despite lack of formal support for it in either law or school system constitutions.

Charles Bidwell (1965:992), in his classic analysis of the school as a formal organization, stresses the fact that we have limited knowledge about the "interplay of bureaucratization and professionalism in the schools," and the role this interplay plays in decision-making.

The fundamental outcome of this study is the delineation of a model, referred to as the Interacting Spheres Model (ISM), which treats ramifications of governance and decision-making derived from the professional/bureaucratic interface. The model illustrates the existence and interaction of two very dissimilar decisional environments (rational and programmed vs. unemcumbered and non-prescriptive) which support differing organizational requirements essential to the mission of the school.

The ISM model suggests the presence of the following organizational characteristics which shape the processes of school governance and decision-making:

a. two interacting spheres of influence in the school with identifiable types of decisions formally "zoned" (to use Lortie's term) to administrators and others informally "zoned" to teachers. Varied measures of decisional autonomy reside within each sphere.

b. a base of authority for administrators legitimized by the organizational charters of the school district and a base of informal power for teachers legitimized by the ideology of the teaching profession and the expertise of the teachers.

c. identifiable constraints placing limits on the decision-making autonomy of both spheres.

d. processes of decisional accommodation which act as conflict reduction devices for those decisions which fall in areas where the spheres overlap.

e. direct and indirect strategies used by members of each sphere to manage the behavior of members of the other sphere.

f. defensive strategies used by members of each sphere to protect their own sphere from outside intervention.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The data from this research are principally drawn from a field study (Scott, 1965) of three selected schools in a district located in the Western part of the United States. The city, referred to as Silverwood, has a population of about 150,000 and is located on the fringe of a large metropolitan area. The Silverwood School District, made up of four high schools, three middle schools and 28 elementary schools, enjoys a reputation of being innovative in its educational programs as well as sensitive to the needs of its community. The three schools, two elementary and one middle school, selected for the study, reflect the reputation enjoyed by the district. The school principals

are well respected in the district and the community for their knowledge, dedication, and administrative skills. The study was not designed as a comparison between schools. The purpose of using schools of two distinct grade levels was to determine if the same framework (structure and process, but not content) of a model would emerge from both types. Emphasis here, however, is given to the middle school.

The design of the study is exploratory and hence, according to Richard Scott (1965:267), ". . . is one in which the primary purpose is to gain familiarity with some problem or to achieve new insights which can guide future research." The data were gathered through intensive interviews and a document analysis which covered a period of six months. As in all field studies, patterns of events were sought out and isolated, esoteric episodes were excluded.

The issue of generalizing the model to other schools is an important facet of the research. The argument here is that the existence of the interacting nature of the processes of decision-making as exhibited in the model but not the content of decision-making can be generalized to other schools. Testing the model in other settings using other methodologies is an important next step.

As in all research, this study has limitations. The paper examines the worlds of teachers and administrators only, thus excluding other parties who have obvious roles in issues of school governance, such as: parents, students, central office figures, the board of education, the state legislature, and so on. However, doing research is something like building a multi-stage rocket; the first stage is built and tested before the additional stages are added on. Another limitation is that

most of the data relating to key issues cannot be presented; space constraints only permit the inclusion of selected (but representative) data.

Professional Persons in Bureaucratic Organizations

Walking through the Silverwood schools, a visitor would quickly note bountiful evidence of rationally structured and systematically executed processes of organization and administration under the direct control of the principals. For example, there are cohorts of students moving to the appropriate places at the appropriate times, buses swinging in and out of the parking lot moving their charges, teachers materializing at assigned teaching or extra duty stations, cafeteria workers putting out the sandwiches just before the hungry students rush in, and so on. At the same time, however, the visitor would note that certain decisions are being made throughout the schools which are controlled by the teachers who are acting relatively independent of the administrators. These decisions tend to be made by teachers within what might be described as protected pockets of autonomy which seem to encompass the teaching-learning process of the school.

The presence of the teachers' autonomy surrounding the instructional process revealed itself in four ways, as illustrated by the following examples which are representative of patterns. Firstly, the teachers tend to feel that they are the ultimate authorities in the teaching-learning process because of their expertise in specialized fields. Who is your supervisor in the learning process?, the teachers were asked. "Because of my philosophy of education," came one typical

response, "I turn to other science teachers in the district who are kind of attuned to the way I am. I don't consider that I have a supervisor in my subject matter in this building."

Secondly, the teachers generally feel that they have the right to organize the learning process in the fashion they choose. An administrator commented:

> Each teacher has the right to develop the content and thus the class as he or she feels most comfortable and most successful. I think they are left pretty much on their own as long as there are favorable results. If suddenly the structure or students break down, then it is time for (administrators) to work with them.

Thirdly, the instructional process is relatively unencumbered by a network of school rules defining how the teaching-learning events are to be shaped. The rational network of impersonal school rules tend to stop at the classroom door, and the teachers at that point begin making up their own personalized, flexible rules to aid them in the instructional process.

Lastly, there are occasions when a teacher will not respond in accordance to stated district policy or the instructions of the school principal. Would it be possible, a principal was asked, for a teacher to say "no" to an administrative directive? "Yes," he replied, "and it is done. In a sense this is what many are saying--I don't have to. But if you have a teacher who is making legitimate headway and is humanistic in approach, I believe it would be very difficult for me and the district to say 'you must change.'"

What gives the teacher the right to say "no" to the formal authority structure of the school district?, teachers were asked. "It's just the functioning of the system that allows the teacher to do that," came a common response. "It's kind of an abstract thing; nothing you can pin down--a teacher is put in that position. To a degree it is probably tenure, but it certainly is more than that." Later it will be argued that the illusive concept she was struggling for is a derivative of the phenomenon of the professional employee in the bureaucratic organization.

A number of teachers as well as administrators articulated the notion of "separateness" by using words such as "our domain" or "our world" or "our sphere," or "an invisible line between us." Stated one such teacher in response to a question on what administrators do in schools:

> Frankly, I am so busy in the classroom and having 140 'vibes' bouncing off me every day that I'm not always aware or concerned about what is going on at the administrative level. I sometimes feel, and this is very subjective, that there are two worlds. There is ours, we teachers have our concerns and our oneness, and the administrators have their concerns and their oneness. Sometimes the twain do not meet.

Q. Do teachers try to directly preserve their oneness?

A. No, it is a very random thing, We don't have meetings or gripe sessions. It's a very informal thing. You just see a friend you trust and you discuss some things that may be worrying you.

It is important to note that the teachers and administrators seemed to be conscious of crossing from one sphere to another. Perceptions on the dimensions and scope of the spheres differed between individuals

and schools (in a way not clearly understood by the writer), but an awareness of the crossing was usually in evidence. For example, one teacher reported:

> Basically, the teacher is supreme in her classroom and what they do there is their own business--but only to a certain extent. Not in all areas do you have this freedom. In areas such as discipline I am given more guidelines and suggestions about how to keep the lid on in the classroom. I am not free to let kids come and go as they please; and if I did try, I would be told that I was violating school rules.

In short, as Figure 1 illustrates, the schools seemed to be characterized by a well orchestrated mix of centralized decision-making with the reins of control in the hands of the principals, and pockets of decisional autonomy with the teachers using their own discretion in decision-making. Thus, the bureaucratic model with its emphasis on centralized decision-making and rationally defined structures is correct only to a point when applied to schools. Elements alien to the classical model are present in the governance process of the school because of the presence of employees who have a professional orientation. The instructional mission of the school becomes the organizing force of the professionalism of the teachers whereas the need for efficient resource allocation and rational planning procedures becomes the organizing force for the administrators. The specter of two very different sources of organizational control in the school then comes into the picture--one rooted in the classical bureaucratic tradition of formal centralized authority and the other rooted in the informal professionalism of the teacher.

Spheres of Influence

After a multitude of interviews in the Silverwood schools, it became increasingly apparent that certain types of decisions were reserved for teachers and other types for administrators. Previously, it was reported that the teachers tended to make decisions affecting the instructional process inside the classroom. School administrators, on the other hand, tended to make: (a) allocation decisions, (b) security decisions, (c) boundary decisions, and (d) evaluation decisions.

Limitations of space prohibit a presentation and discussion of the data which went into the identification of these decisional categories. However, allocation decisions refer basically to the distribution of human and material resources in the school. The task of deciding who (or what) goes where, when and for what purpose tends to reside with the administrators.

Security decisions also fall within the administrators' sphere of influence. Within this zone are found such issues as controlling legal obligations (e.g., supervision of bus zones), preparing disaster plans, defining a policy on school discipline, monitoring the standards of food service, certifying safe playground conditions, and the like.

School boundary issues are also managed by administrators. For example, the only person who can officially represent the school in the community is the principal, all written messages going from teachers to parents must have a copy filed with the principal in case a parent calls on the matter, visitors coming on the school ground must check in at the main office, and the principal's office serves as the communication channel between the superintendent's office and the teacher corps.

Finally, evaluation of teachers and programs falls within the domain of administrators. However, the administrators tend to examine classroom conduct and technique rather than subject matter, which is within the teachers' sphere.

Dan Lortie (1969:35-36) supports these observations when he writes:

> The teacher's immersion in teaching tasks and her relative indifference to organizational affairs affects her relationship to the principal and colleagues. Caring less about school-wide than classroom affairs, the teacher is not reluctant to grant the principal clear hegemony over those matters which do not bear directly upon her teaching activities. The basis for zoning decisions is laid; the principal's primary sphere is the school-at-large, the teacher's is the classroom.

It is significant to note that the zoning process plays an important role in laying the basis of predictability between teachers and administrators and therefore functions as a conflict reduction mechanism which permits the tasks of the school to be carried out more smoothly. The lack of predictability would serve as a constraint on behavior. A series of informal "understandings" have evolved from multiple meetings, school bulletins, announcements and numerous private conversations which treat school issues. Over time, patterns develop in each school and a general understanding exists regarding "the way we do things around here." New teachers and administrators are socialized into these patterns.

Limits to Autonomy

Autonomy of decision-making within the administrators' sphere of influence or the teachers' sphere obviously cannot be unlimited. In the Silverwood schools, the outer limits of decisional autonomy are shaped by a variety of forces, some of which are rigid in character and others permitting considerable room for situational interpretation. Basically, these constraints are imposed by the state legislature, the local board of education, parental expectations, the leadership style of the principals, the professional standards of the teachers and the availability of resources.

Clearly, the state education code draws a line with its pronouncements on prohibited instruction, such as, "No teacher giving instruction in any school . . . shall advocate or teach communism with the intent to indoctrinate any pupil. . . ." The teachers must also adopt their text books from among those approved by the state.

Policy established by the school board also limits the degrees of freedom available to local school officials. A policy manual of the district reads that when the process of decision-making functions, ". . . the decisions do emerge, and commitment occurs. People, especially leadership staff, who choose to work in the district, must be committed to such mandates. Choice to work outside these mandated guidelines is not available. . . ."

As the half circles inside the teachers sphere of influence illustrated in Figure 1 suggest, all teachers do not share the same degree of decisional autonomy. One interesting example of differing limits of autonomy can be seen with the arrival of individualized instruction,

mandated by the board of education a few years ago. Those teachers who agreed with the philosophy behind this form of instruction and organized their teaching (and made their decisions) within this context, reported a wide ranging sense of autonomy in the classroom. However, those teachers who were more conservative in educational philosophy and believed in the traditional classroom techniques tended to feel severe constraints on their decision-making discretion. Reported one such teacher, "I will hardly do anything without first asking permission because I feel apprehensive that the rug might be pulled out from under me. The liberal teachers can try anything and get away with it. I see them trying all kinds of wild way out things that I wouldn't dare try."

Can the teachers reject individualized instruction?, teachers were asked. A common response was:

> Basically yes, except the fact that the philosophy isn't that way. If you do it that way somehow there will be pressure--either from other teachers or the principal. Maybe the pressure will come in an indirect way, but there will be a lot of pressure. Maybe a teacher will fear evaluation. 'Possibly they will send me to another school or someplace I don't belong,' a teacher thinks to herself. These may be false ideas, but in a sense they are real because they are on the teachers' minds.

Indeed, when teachers don't conform to district policy, pressures can be brought to bear, ranging from subtle to powerful, which serve to constrain the teachers' autonomy to the point where it is consistent with district policy. For example, one teacher reported:

> We were told in no uncertain terms that team teaching was here and lets get with it or look for another district. I was in a room where we had these doors that could be opened or closed, and at first we didn't open the doors as much as we could have. As administrators looked in more and more pressure was put on us to open them up. I didn't feel that opening the doors was

> essential to team teaching. I felt that planning where we coordinated our work could result in effective team teaching. Later we were forced to open them, and they told us that 'If you don't open the doors we'll get teachers up here who will.'

Probably more than any other variable in the Silverwood schools, the leadership style of the principal determines the depth and range of the teachers' autonomy. The principal stands as a kind of gatekeeper when it comes to interpreting and enforcing the rules, policies, and expectations of the state education code, the board of education, and the parents. A commonly heard observation was:

> Whether we like it or not, the principal--his attitude, his philosophy--permeates the whole staff. You can see it in the running of the whole school. If the principal is one who doesn't want to put too much pressure on the teachers, lets them do what they wish, doesn't worry too much about parental complaints, then we are going to have more autonomy. But if the principal does yield to parental pressures, then we are going to have less autonomy.

The principal, then, is continually monitoring the environment of the school, opening the gate at times and closing it at other times depending on the situation (Litwak and Meyer, 1965).

Also, the norms of the teaching profession place a limit on autonomy. As one teacher pointed out:

> How do I know what the outer limits are? I think that if you have good taste and are self perceptive, you know how far you can go in the realm of good taste and professional behavior. I think that a little inner voice tells you. I feel that if I consider myself a professional there are certain standards that I do meet. But nobody has ever dictated to me yet.

Finally, the existence and use of rules limits the degree of autonomy in the Silverwood schools. Virtually everyone recognizes the importance of having standardized school rules which give organization order, and direction to the flow of students in and around the building.

However, the teachers feel that standardized rules governing their classroom activities would not be helpful due to the rigidity involved. Making a set of flexible classroom rules is within the domain of the teachers.

Ronald Corwin (1974:254) points out that the administrators' sphere of influence, and thus their decisional autonomy, has definite limits which are imposed by many sources.

> The power of administrative officials in schools and universities is limited by many checks and balances, such as the offices that control budgets, space allocations, hiring and personnel, admissions, and the like; professional associations, accrediting agencies, federal agencies; civil service; coordinating boards; budgeting and planning offices; the executive at the city and state government levels; the power of departments; and professional organizations.

As one compares the types of decisions made within the administrators' sphere of influence with those made within the teachers' sphere, it becomes evident that <u>there is by no means an even balance between them</u>. While the district and school administrators tend to make policy and procedural decisions, the teachers tend to make the day-to-day operational decisions of the classroom. However, these actions of teachers are extremely important because it is through them that the school succeeds or fails in its mission. Hence, the intensive concern among administrators and teachers for providing enough freedom from constraints to enable teachers to perform unique acts of creation in the classroom, but not so much freedom as to foment uncoordinated and unsystematic efforts.

Behavioral Management Across Spheres

The two spheres of influence identified in the Silverwood schools do not, of course, come as neatly separated entities. A considerable amount of overlap exists between the spheres where extensive collaboration of parties on all sides is necessary if a task is to be completed, such as the introduction of a new reading program which requires special student coordination, or the preparation of a community oriented exhibit of student projects that requires considerable effort by teachers.

Within this region of overlap, an extensive use of the democratic process as well as informal bargaining serve as significant conflict reduction mechanisms. The use of a collective decision-making process not only serves to reduce tensions, it also tends to give the parties involved a sense of investment and even commitment to the actions decided upon. These features have contributed significantly to the relatively healthy organizational climate found in the Silverwood schools.

Administrators Managing Teacher Behavior. Lane, et al. (1966:135) have written that "Because subordinates are personally affected by their superiors' decisions, they seek to influence them." In the Silverwood schools there are some subtle and other none-too-subtle practices of behavioral management employed by teachers trying to manage events taking place in the administrators' sphere of influence and by administrators trying to manage events taking place within the teachers' sphere.

These tactics are frequently quite creative and at times unrecognized by the other parties. Direct intervention is usually avoided whenever possible.

The basic strategies used by administrators seem to involve a manipulation of the intrinsic reward structure of the teachers as well as a manipulation of the normative sense of being a professional which is inherent in the thinking of most teachers. (Manipulation is used here in a sociological sense and has no negative connotation attached.) As an example, a principal responded to the following question:

Q. Do you have strategies you employ to get teachers to adopt new activities?

A. Yes, probably the most successful is positive reinforcement. In other words, we get one teacher started who really believes in it and makes it a success. By praising this teacher in a staff meeting, I make her feel good and successful. Everyone wants to feel like this, so soon other teachers start coming to my office and say 'come and see such and such,' and I find they have copied what the other teacher has done. This is the way to get my attention and they know that.

Manipulating the teachers' normative sense of being a professional is also used frequently as a point of leverage. An official in the district observed:

> I hear over and over in the schools, 'We are professionals.' You hear it in about every sentence. Those words imply there are certain things we don't do. There is a certain code of behavior to which we adhere. And who defines what is professional or unprofessional? The administrator does.

A variation of the "We are professionals therefore we will do this and not that," theme surrounds the semi-sacred teacher-student relationship. In the Silverwood schools it is common to hear administrators telling teachers (and teachers telling teachers), "We must do this

because it is best for the kids." "This" can mean almost anything that reflects current district policy: team teaching, individualized instruction, cross-age teaching or the whiz bang reading method. No hard data are presented to support the district's contention, probably because clear and convincing evidence are rarely, if ever, available which point out that one method is really better than another. However, the conviction, based more or less on face validity, says that "this is best for kids, and for you (the teacher) to do less is not fulfilling your professional responsibility."

Direct appeals to the moral conviction of teachers who want to fulfill their professional responsibility and do what is best for their students can move large numbers of teachers to extraordinary efforts. In the Silverwood schools, one can observe teachers expending vast sums of energy and enormous blocks of their own time in fulfilling their professional responsibilities.

It is important to remember that these practices of behavioral management are social mechanisms of control which take the place of a command structure that is often found in bureaucratic organizations that do not have professional persons as employees.

Teachers Managing Administrator Behavior. The bureaucratic model of organization and administration emphasize the fact that it is the supervisor who is the originator of action. Within a system of graded authority, each supervisor defines for his subordinates the nature of the task and how it is to be accomplished. However, in a school system, and many other types of organizations as well, the formal leader finds

that he both initiates actions for his subordinates to follow as well as responds to actions his subordinates have initiated--an event quite alien to the bureaucratic model.

In other words, the teachers also practice the art (refined to a science by some) of managing the behavior of administrators; sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. It is, for example, a common occurrence for a teacher or teachers to walk into the office of a principal and ask for some type of support for a special project, "I see the principal as someone who can give me help when I want to do something in my classroom," replied one such teacher, "whether its getting money or scheduling something or getting cooperation from other teachers. He does this." The principal in this case is working as an agent of the teacher--a role the principals of the Silverwood schools feel is an important one for them. It is convenient for the principal to act this way in many instances because his goals and the teachers' goals coincide.

At times the principal is being managed in such a subtle way that he is unaware of the situation. Teachers will often invite administrators into their classrooms on special occasions. "I wanted him to see what I was doing with the kids," the teacher stated. "I thought that I had effected changes with some of them, and he might be able to see the results." Such visits are frequently intended to result in positively rewarding comments and ultimately a favorable evaluation.

Similarly, there are situations where teachers may manage the behaviors of administrators as well as certain members of the community. "I think that many teachers are aware of the different groups that

operate around the school that examine the type of materials that come into the classroom," a teacher observed. She went on stating that "you insulate yourself by making this so open that people may come in." By providing opportunities for community members and administrators to give "input" into the selection of materials, then if something goes wrong and "it hits the fan I can say I had a committee that worked on this; I've had parent involvement." In such an instance the adverse reaction would not fall on the teacher alone. It would be syndicated among parents and administrators as well.

There were also instances in the Silverwood schools where the administrators found themselves in situations where they were carrying out the will of the teachers even when they (administrators) considered such actions not to be the most appropriate under existing conditions. This situation usually developed because the administrators of the Silverwood schools tend to rely on the democratic process for many of their decisions. The principals would at times end up favoring the minority position but would necessarily have to carry out the opinion of the majority.

Probably the most visibly dramatic incidents when administrators act as the agents of teachers against their will is in the rare circumstance when the teachers unite against the position they see an administrator taking. In such instances the teachers become a formidable pressure group. As a district official pointed out, there are occasions when a group of teachers will unite and march down to the central office and complain about an action taken by a local school administrator.

There are strong norms against going over the head of a principal to the central office and when it happens the seriousness of the situation is obvious to everyone. At the price of reducing the level of tension, the local administrator may find himself having to reverse or at least temper his decision and thus become the agent of the teachers in this instance.

Edwin Bridges (1970:12) has identified three sets of conditions ". . . under which the subordinates' goals intrude into and influence administrative decisions." In each case Bridges refers to the administrator as a "pawn" because his behavior is being managed by others.

1. Administrative man--pawn without his knowledge. In making his decisions, the administrator clearly is not acting on his own, but he feels that he is an origin. He is unaware that his behavior matches the intent of his subordinates and is caused by their purposes, desires, and aims.

2. Administrative man--pawn against his will. In making his decisions, the administrator is most certainly not acting on his own and is aware that the goals underlying his behavior are primarily those of his subordinates and not his own.

3. Administrative man--pawn by choice. In making his decisions, the administrator, willingly and knowingly, uses the goals of his subordinates as the principal basis for choosing the course of action he will take.

To varying degrees, all three of these situations defined by Bridges were found to exist in the Silverwood schools. Significantly, the third condition, "pawn by choice," is considered the ideal role by the principals; even beyond that of having some form of unilateral control.

Defending the Spheres

In the day to day conduct of affairs, the teachers and administrators in the Silverwood schools go about their jobs in a predictable, systematic way following established patterns. However, the school district has a history of adopting innovative practices which may be passed down to teachers as mandates or simply as increasingly intensified pressure for change. In any case, an attempt at direct intervention by superordinates is launched.

Defensive Strategies of Teachers. Teachers respond in differing ways when they feel their domain is being challenged. Many teachers adjust their thinking and practices as quickly as possible out of the conviction that this is the response of a professional. Other teachers will dig in their heels and hold the line against what they see as bandwagon fads which roll through this nation's educational systems like ocean waves. After all, no hard data surface which illustrate convincingly that the current fad is any better than the last one. These teachers also view themselves as the guardians of the classrooms and it is their duty as professionals to preserve the "tried and true" in the best interests of the students.

Both types of teachers are, interestingly enough, responding to what they consider to be in the best interests of the profession; and, therefore, both see their actions as legitimate. In the Silverwood schools when assuming a defensive posture, teachers who do not support the proposed change will argue such things as, "We are not given extra time, equipment or resources to perform this new activity," or, "If we do this we will be lowering our standards." A classic blocking response

is, "I've been teaching for 35 years, and I've been successful with 90% of my kids." Unfortunately, pedagogical issues are still relatively judgmental, therefore, it is difficult for anyone, including administrators, to establish an objective (as opposed to subjective) position against this type of argument. After all, who is to say that these teachers and all others like them might not be right in their situations?

The following comment by a teacher is interesting because it not only articulates the defensive position, it also suggests that the professional responsibility of teachers is to stand firm.

> The district is going to milk you for everything they can. If they can get you to handle a classroom of 40 kids without an aide or 200 learning packets a night--if you are dumb enough to do it--they are going to let you keep doing it. My thought is, what will happen to the kids if I don't keep holding out? (emphasis added).

In pursuing the notion of defensive stands on the part of teachers, it became apparent that they seem to possess what might be called a "pocket veto" over attempts at intervention into instructional events of the classroom. The concept of a "pocket veto" is used because it becomes manifest through inaction; a lack of response, in other words, to requests or mandates for change. Witness the comments of one teacher.

> When I came here the big thrust then was--and I believe we have a new education game we play every year--but the big thrust then was teaming. Two teachers were to develop a program and instruct together. In some cases it just didn't work out. In our case we could see that day by day we were falling away from the work we had set up originally, and we couldn't make it work for us. We didn't tell the principal about it and just got busy with new ideas because a new wave came in about that time called individualized learning. I'm sure the principal was finally aware of it, but he didn't say anything about it; and we haven't said anything to him.

The principal of a school is usually the one who directly encounters these defensive stands. In describing the strategies she has encountered, one principal observed:

> A few teachers feel comfortable enough to come to me and talk over their disagreement with district policy and openly say 'I don't agree, and this is what I am doing.' I have others who will wait until they have an audience, like at a staff meeting and a few will band together and argue against it trying to get others to go along. Others say 'Okay, I'll try it,' but they are playing a game because after a month they will say, 'See, it didn't work.' Actually, they weren't going to let it work. We would go into their classrooms and find that they were only doing pieces of it. And it was a deliberate--might as well call it what it was--a deliberate plot to prove that the method they have been using for years and years is better than this new method.

Defensive Strategies of Administrators. Although the administrators of the Silverwood schools try to establish themselves as agents of the teachers, there are occasions when they also fall into a defensive stance as a means of protecting their own domain. For example, when teachers come forward with strong demands for, say, a tougher policy on student discipline or more free planning time or additional resources for new curricular programs, the administrator has numerous tactics to blunt the thrust if he feels he must. He can make a non-decision; that is, decide not to decide and hope the matter dies a natural death. In this instance the principal has a "pocket veto" of his own.

Also, the principal can pass the buck to the central office by saying, "This is district policy and all I can do is reflect that policy. It is out of my hands." He may buy time through forming a committee to study the issue and hope to influence the committee recommendation. As a final effort he may make a decisive "no" decision which he can legitimately do because of his role in the formal authority

structure. The latter stance is usually avoided because the administrators want to parry the notion that they are insensitive to the needs of teachers.

Discussion. At this stage of the study, we have arrived at the point where some generalizations can be drawn on the nature of autonomy and power located within the teachers' sphere of influence. (The sphere of most interest to this study.) If the teachers do possess a degree of discretion in making certain decisions, they must also have autonomy from outside intervention as well as the power to act.

Autonomy, according to Fred Katz (1968:18) ". . . refers to the independence of subunits of an organization from control by other parts of the organization or even by the whole organization." Power, on the other hand, is the ability of one unit to influence or impose its will on another unit (Kaplan, 1964:13-14). Corwin (1974:257) is quick to point out that ". . . autonomy and control represent independent dimensions; the two terms do not refer to opposite ends of a single continuum. The absence of external control, for example, doesn't necessarily imply that teachers themselves have internal control." Autonomy, however, is usually a necessary but not sufficient condition for power.

As several writers have pointed out, the teacher possesses few of the sources of power found in other professions (Lortie, 1964; Lieberman, 1956). For example, teachers generally do not have control over those who are to be admitted to the profession, hold powers of sanction over those in the profession, control communication processes,

become indispensable so they cannot be replaced, or develop strong bases of independent support located outside the school (with the possible exception of coaches).

As found in this study, the sources of power that the teachers possess appear to be a mix of academic expertise, the ideology of the teaching mission which suggests the teacher is the guardian of the classroom, and at times the support of colleagues. Corwin (1973:165) writes in this vein:

> The professional employee . . . denies the principle that his work always must be supervised by administrators and controlled by laymen. Because of his training, pressures from his colleagues, and his dedication to clients, the professionally oriented person considers himself competent enough to control his own work. Hence, he sometimes must be disobedient toward his supervisors precisely in order to improve his proficiency and to maintain standards of client welfare--especially if there are practices that jeopardize the best interests of students . . . .

The study has illustrated that the teachers have a degree of autonomy surrounding affairs in the classroom subject to well defined parameters. Their power to act, however, represents a very low level of power which is drawn of the hierarchy and directed mostly at students (control of the teaching-learning process as well as control of student behavior). In this instance the administrators are also acting to establish, preserve, and protect the autonomy and power of teachers because the activities of the teachers are viewed as being in the best interests of the school and the administrative leadership.

However, when the administrators attempt to withdraw the autonomy of teachers and intervene in classroom events, the teacher can direct a different type of power (nonhierarchical) at the intended intervention in order to block it. This type of power, referred to as "pocket veto

power," serves to neutralize the expectations or directives of the administrators. A variety of direct as well as sub rosa tactics illustrated this fact in the data of the study. Significantly, this type of teacher power is one sided in that it can only be used to block an attempt at outside intervention; it cannot be used by a teacher to initiatiate change. Also, it is important to note that the use of "pocket veto power" is usually seen by teachers as a legitimate right of a teacher as she sets out to protect the best interests of her students. In this instance the teacher is the one giving definition to what is in the best interests of her students; a definition with which administrators do not always agree.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the idea of the "pocket veto" being a type of power actually extends the definition of power as it was illustrated earlier by Kaplan (1964:13-14)--the ability of one unit to influence or impose its will on another. It seems to this writer that successfully blocking a superordinate from imposing his will is also an exercise of power even though the subordinate does not impose his will on the leader.

Conclusion

This paper argues the existence of at least two interfacing decisional environments in the school. The first, mainly reflecting school wide affairs, lends itself to rational centrally controlled procedures which restrict behaviors to conform to well programmed events. The second, mainly reflecting classroom affairs, requires the flexibility and autonomy to initiate acts of creativity. Both of these environments are merged in such a way as to carry forward simultaneously

with each ideally presenting a relatively low level of interference to the other. In other words, pockets of autonomy are built into, as well as protected by, the overall formal structure of the organization. However, at times the teachers and administrators protect their pockets of autonomy using their own devices.

The outcome of this study was the construction of a model which, the writer believes, gives clearer understanding to the ramifications of the bureaucratic/professional interface and the role it plays in the processes of governance and decision making in the school. The existence of the model, graphically illustrated in Figure 1 and described in the introduction to this paper, is fundamentally a hypothesis at this point and needs to be examined in the context of other schools in other environments using other methodologies.

A final observation on the study is that if the basic properties of the Interacting Spheres Model hold up under additional testing at the level of the school, then the question arises as to its potential in description and analysis at other levels of the educational system. Perhaps the same model could be used to analyze the patterns of interaction and decision-making as they take place between the central office of a district and the school principal or between the members of a school board and the superintendent. The possibilities seem promising.

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Figure 1

Interacting Spheres Model